

**Sharing Ven: Mahāsī Sayādaw's Abroad Dhamma Talks only**  
**(Questions are created by Thāmanaykyaw Mahāgandāyon Sayādaw)**  
**for Europe Retreat 2023 (May-June)**  
**(Q-100 & A-100)**

**The Way to Happiness**

Q:001 - *Everyone wants to be happy, but what must one do and how should one live to be happy?*

- Everyone should know this much. Because of his great compassion, the Buddha taught us about this 'Way to Happiness.' Happiness is of two kinds: happiness in this very life, and happiness in the future lives. Happiness in this life can be gained by four accomplishments (*sampadā*), namely: *uṭṭhānasampadā*, *ārakkhasampadā*, *kalyāṇamittatā* and *samajivitā*.

Q:002 - *What does uṭṭhānasampadā mean?*

- *Uṭṭhānasampadā* means alertness or diligence in one's work. In whatever work that you do, whether it is agriculture, commerce or education, you should apply your skill, and work diligently. If you do so, you will earn what you deserve, which is obvious.

Q:003 - *What does Ārakkhasampadā mean?*

- *Ārakkhasampadā* means wariness or watchfulness so that your worldly possessions may not be lost. This too is clear.

Q:004 - *What does Kalyāṇamittatā mean?*

- *Kalyāṇamittatā* means association with good friends, who can help you work for your well-being. To get such good friends, it is important that your dealings with people be motivated by good-will (*mettā*). According to the Buddha, a good friend should be one who has the virtues of faith (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), generosity (*cāga*) and wisdom (*paññā*). If a friend is lacking in faith, your faith can fail. If a friend is lacking in morality, your morality can fail. If a friend is lacking in generosity or wisdom, you too may lack them.

Q:005 - *What does Samajivitā mean?*

- *Samajivitā* means to live within your means. You should spend less than your income, not more. If possible, you should set aside a quarter of your income

and spend only three-quarters. There are many examples of people who became wealthy by living within their means. There are similar examples of people who became rich by cultivating the other accomplishments. Therefore, to be happy and prosperous one should try to fulfil these accomplishments.

Q:006 - *Is it more important to be happy in one's future lives than it is to be happy just in this life?*

- However, it is more important to be happy in one's future lives than it is to be happy just in this life, so the Buddha taught us four further accomplishments. They are: accomplishment in faith (*saddhāsampadā*), accomplishment in morality (*sīlasampadā*), accomplishment in generosity (*cāgasampadā*) and accomplishment in wisdom (*paññāsampadā*).

Q:007 - *What does saddhāsampadā mean?*

- Of these four, *saddhāsampadā* means to have faith in what one should have faith in.

Q:008 - *What should one have faith in?*

- One should have faith in the true Buddha, the true Dhamma, the true Saṅgha and in the law of kamma and its effects.

Q:009 - *What does araham mean?*

- *Araham* means one who is purified of all defilements such as greed, hatred, delusion and so forth.

Q:010 - *What does Sammāsambuddha mean?*

- *Sammāsambuddha* means one who knows the four truths by his own knowledge.

Q:011 - *What is Faith in the law of kamma and its effects?*

- Faith in the law of *kamma* and its effects, believing that unwholesome actions bring unpleasant results and that wholesome actions bring pleasant results, is also well-placed faith or *saddhāsampadā*. To have faith in *kamma* and its effects is essential. If one does not believe in kamma, but wrongly believes that someone such as an Almighty Being will save us, or is responsible for the

good and bad results that we get, then one will not do good deeds and will do mostly bad deeds instead. If one has not done good deeds, one will not enjoy happiness, but will meet only suffering, which is the result of bad deeds. It is just like someone who has to suffer illness after eating rotten or unsuitable food instead of fresh or suitable food.

*Q:012 - What is true story about this?*

- In the days of the Buddha there was a rich Brahmin called Todeyya living at Sāvattthī who was the king's adviser. He had fabulous wealth, but did not give anything to anyone, and told others, "If you give, you lose what you have, so do not give anything." He died greatly attached to his wealth and was reborn as a dog in his own house.
- One day the Buddha came to that house on his round for alms because he wanted to teach the true Dhamma to the young man Subha, the son of Todeyya. The dog that was formerly Todeyya came running out and barked at the Buddha. The Buddha spoke to the dog, "Hey Todeyya, you showed disrespect to me in your former birth, so now you have become a dog. Now you are barking at me and will be reborn in Avīci hell for this bad action." On hearing this the dog thought, "This recluse Gotama knows me." Feeling very ill at ease he went to the kitchen and lay down to sleep in the ashes there. As he was the young Brahmin's pet, he used to sleep in his own comfortable bed. When the young man Subha saw him sleeping in the ashes, he asked his servants why, and was told what had happened.
- Young Subha thought to himself, "According to the Brahmin religion my father should have been reborn as a Brahmā, but the recluse Gotama called the dog 'Todeyya.' Thus he is saying that my father has been reborn as a dog. He just says whatever he likes." Thus he was deeply offended and came to the Buddha to accuse him of speaking a falsehood. He asked the Buddha what he had said to Todeyya the dog and the Buddha told him. Then to arouse faith in the young man the Buddha asked him, "Is there any wealth that your father didn't reveal before he died?"
- The young man replied that four hundred thousand was missing.
- The Buddha said to him, "Feed the dog well, and before he falls asleep ask him where the treasure is; he will reveal everything."
- So Subha thought, "If what the recluse Gotama says turns out to be true, I will find the treasure; if it is wrong then I can accuse him of a falsehood." So he fed the dog and asked him about the treasure. The dog led him to the buried treasure. On recovering his wealth, Subha thought to himself, "The recluse Gotama knows the secrets hidden to us by death. He is indeed the Buddha who knows all things." So he began to have faith in the Buddha. Later he came to the Buddha with fourteen difficult questions.

Q:013 - *What are his questions, in brief?*

- His questions, in brief, were as follows: “Why is it that among human beings, some live a short life while others live long; some have poor health while others are healthy; some are ugly while others are pleasing to look at; some are friendless while others have many friends; some are poor while others are rich; some are low-born while others are of noble birth; and some are ignorant while others are intelligent? What is it that divides them into these high and low states?”

Q:014 - *How did The Buddha reply?*

- The Buddha replied, “Young man, beings are owners of their deeds, heirs to their deeds, their deeds are the womb that bears them, their deeds are their relatives and their refuge. Their deeds divide them into high and low states.”

Q:015 - *What is a full statement on the law of kamma?*

- “The young man Subha did not understand this brief statement so he asked the Buddha to explain it more fully.

#### Short and Long Lives

- If a man or woman kills a living being, because of this deed of killing, he or she will be reborn in a state of suffering — in hell. If born as a man or woman again, he or she will live a short life. One who abstains from killing will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will live a long time.

#### Sickness and Health

- One who harms others will arise in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will have many diseases. If one does not harm living beings, one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will enjoy good health.

#### Ugliness and Beauty

- One who is full of anger will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will be ugly. If one controls one's anger and shows forbearance, one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being one will be good-looking.

#### Having Few or Many Friends

- If one envies the good fortune of others, one will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will be friendless. If one rejoices at the success of others, one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will have many friends.

### Poverty and Wealth

- If one does not give and discourages others from giving, one will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will be poor. If one gives to others, one will be reborn in heaven. If one is born as a human being, one will be wealthy.

### Low Birth and Noble Birth

- If, being proud, one does not show respect to those who deserve it, one will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being one will be low born. If one pays respect to others, one will be reborn in heaven. If born as a human being, one will have a noble birth.

### Foolishness and Wisdom

- If one never asks what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, one will be reborn in a state of suffering. If born as a human being, one will be foolish.

*Q:016 - How should you constantly cultivate loving-kindness (mettā)?*

- So if you constantly cultivate loving-kindness (mettā), There will be no occasion for unwholesome deeds to occur. Everyone wants to be happy and no one likes to suffer. Also, one wishes for others to be peaceful and happy. This is a very good attitude indeed and no one can find any fault with it. To cultivate kindness one should think of other living beings individually or collectively and mentally recite, "May they be happy!"
- You can think of someone, or anyone you can see, and cultivate *mettā* towards them. "May he be happy! May she be happy! May they be happy!" You need to do this in your mind only. If occasion arises, you can also speak some kind words, or if there is something you can do to help, you can do it personally.

*Q:017 - Even if you cannot help others by kind actions or words, what can you do?*

- Even if you cannot help others by kind actions or words, if you refrain from improper speech and actions, this is also cultivating kindness in deeds and words.
- Although you may not have seen them, you can imagine all beings and wish, "May they be happy!" You can cultivate kindness in the mind only. You may do this for five minutes, ten minutes, half an hour, an hour or more, as much as you can spare the time. If your practice goes well you may gain *jhāna* and will be reborn in the *Brahmā* world, where you can live happily for aeons.

Q:018 - *The Buddha did not want us to be content with the bliss of the Brahmā heavens only, didn't he?*

- The Buddha did not want us to be content with the bliss of the Brahmā heavens only. Once an old Brahmin named Dhanañjāni, who was on his deathbed, sent for Venerable Sāriputta to listen to the Dhamma from him. Venerable Sāriputta taught to him how to cultivate love and compassion — a practice that leads to rebirth in the Brahmā world. Then he returned to his monastery. The Brahmin, Dhanañjāni, meditated on *mettā* and very soon passed away. Because of his *mettā jhāna*, he was reborn in the Brahmā heaven. It may not have taken him more than an hour, for he died and became a Brahmā before Venerable Sāriputta had reached his monastery

Q:019 - *Did the Buddha blame Venerable Sāriputta for failing to teach about insight meditation (vipassanā)?*

- The Buddha blamed Venerable Sāriputta for failing to teach about insight meditation (*vipassanā*). So Venerable Sāriputta went at once to the Dhanañjāni Brahmā and taught to him about *vipassanā*, the teaching that leads to the path and its fruition, and to *nibbāna*. The Brahmā meditated as instructed and realised the path and its fruition.
- Therefore, it is not suitable for us to stop our talk after just speaking about *mettā*, the practice that can lead one to *jhāna*.

Q:020 - *Should we also talk about insight meditation, the practice that leads to nibbana?*

- We should also talk about insight meditation, the practice that leads to *nibbāna*.

Q:021 - *What does Insight meditation mean?*

- Insight meditation means to contemplate the arising and passing away of the five aggregates of attachment (*upādānakkhandhā*), to realise that they are all impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anatta*). Attachment (*upādāna*) includes craving (*taṇhā*) and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*) — the view that there is a permanent soul or self in a living being. The five mental and material aggregates grasped by craving are called the aggregates of attachment. These aggregates manifest whenever one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or thinks. If one fails to notice these events immediately, one does not know them accurately, but mistakes them for permanent, pleasant or good things, or as persons or beings. So one clings to them with craving and wrong view. To overcome attachment to them, we must note all mental and material phenomena at the moment of their occurrence.

Q:022 - *In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta how are we taught?*

- In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta we are taught to observe the bodily movements like walking, standing, sitting and so on, and to note them as 'walking,' 'standing,' 'sitting' and so forth. Pleasant and unpleasant feelings, must be noted as 'pleasant' or 'unpleasant.' Mind-objects or thoughts, too, should be noted as 'passionate,' 'dispassionate,' 'angry,' 'not angry' and so on. We must also be aware of the visible objects and visual consciousness as 'seeing' and so on. When you hear something, you should note it as 'hearing.' Although it should be taught in full as 'I am seeing' or 'I am hearing,' to quicken the noting, we teach our disciples to note just as 'seeing,' 'hearing,' etc.

Q:023 - *If you fail to note clearly and do not know things as they really are when you see or hear something, what will happen to you?*

- If you fail to note clearly and do not know things as they really are when you see or hear something, then lust or delight arises regarding the things seen or heard. Such defilements lead to moral or immoral deeds. Because of these deeds you may be reborn in states of suffering, or you may be reborn as a man or celestial being and suffer old age, disease and death, or other suffering. So one who fails to contemplate the arising mental and physical phenomena, fails to know them as they really are, and is far away from nibbāna. This is explained in the Mālukiyaṭṭa Sutta.
- One who makes a habit of noting whatever he or she sees or hears, knows empirically that things come and go without remaining for a moment, and so understands that they are impermanent, unsatisfactory phenomena without an abiding self. Knowing them as they really are, he or she allows no opportunity for the arising of defilements such as lust or anger regarding the things seen or heard. The defilements are pacified, so one is free from both moral and immoral deeds. Thus, one is free from the suffering of rebirth in the lower realms and from the worlds of gods and men, where one must endure old age, sickness and death.

Q:024 - *Who is close to nibbāna, the end of suffering?*

- When this insight meditation is fully developed, one realises nibbāna through the path and fruition of Arahantship eradicates all suffering. Therefore one who contemplates all phenomena to understand them as they really are when seeing, hearing, etc., is close to nibbāna, the end of suffering. This is also explained in the Mālukiyaṭṭa Sutta.
- Whatever enters through the six sense doors, must be noted and observed as 'seeing,' 'hearing,' etc.

Q:025 - *Why should one begin with only a few things that can be easily discerned. Thus, concentration can be developed and lead to insight knowledge?*

- However, for the beginner, to be aware of everything is quite impossible, so one should begin with only a few things that can be easily discerned. Thus, concentration can be developed and lead to insight knowledge.
- Every time you breathe, your abdomen moves and its rising and falling movement is quite plain to contemplate. That is why we instruct our disciples to begin by noting the abdominal movements as 'rising' and 'falling.' This rising and falling movement is the element of motion, or the air element (*vāyodhātu*). The words 'rising' and 'falling' are not important. The point is to discern the phenomenon of movement.

Q:026 - *What is contemplation of the mind (cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna)?*

- If, while noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, any thought or imagination occurs, note it as 'imagining' or 'thinking.' This is contemplation of the mind (*cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

Q:027 - *What is contemplation of feelings (vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna)?*

- If a painful sensation should occur in the body, you must note it. This is contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

Q:028 - *What is contemplation of the body (kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna)?*

- If there is any bending or stretching of the limbs, you must note as 'bending,' 'stretching.' Whatever bodily movement there is, you must note it. This is contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

Q:029 - *What is contemplation of mental-objects (dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna)?*

- When you see, you must note as 'seeing,' 'seeing.' When you hear, you must note as 'hearing,' 'hearing.' This is contemplation of mental-objects (*dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

Q:030 - *If you continue meditating on whatever occurs, what will happen to you?*

- If you continue meditating on whatever occurs, your concentration will gradually become powerful. Then you will be able to distinguish clearly between the material phenomena, which are known, and the mental phenomena, which know. You will also come to know how each cause brings



- its corresponding effect, and how this causal process goes on. You will realise how each new phenomenon arises and passes away repeatedly. Then you plainly see for yourself that things come and go without remaining for a moment. So they are all impermanent. You will see that death can come at any moment, so all is suffering. You will see how they all occur in spite of your wish, so they are not self. While you are thus meditating, your insight
- gradually develops, and eventually the knowledge of the noble path and its fruition will arise. If you attain the first path of Stream-winning, you will be saved from the lower states of suffering for ever. You will be reborn only in noble and happy existences in the worlds of gods and men. Within seven of these happy existences you will attain the path and fruition of Arahantship and become a worthy one. After passing away as an Arahant, there will be no new births, which means eternal peace.
  - By meditating on arising phenomena beginning with the movements of the abdomen, may you strive to develop insight and realise the impermanent, suffering and egolessness of mental and physical phenomena. May you very soon reach the noble path and attain nibbāna.

## The Teaching of the Buddha

*Q:031 – For what did The Buddha appear on Earth?*

- The Buddha appeared on Earth for the welfare of all humans, devas (celestial beings or shining ones) and Brahmās (pure or chaste ones).
- It is very rare for a Buddha to appear on Earth. There are far more world cycles (kappas) in which Buddhas do not appear than those in which they do. Among the world cycles in which Buddhas appear, there are those in which only one Buddha appears and those in which two, three or four Buddhas appear.

*Q:032 - What is the present world cycle one in which a maximum of five Buddhas appears?*

- Of these five Buddhas, the Buddha Metteyya will not appear until millions of years after the disappearance of the present (Gotama) Buddha's teaching. The teachings of the former Buddhas also disappeared from the world long after their final release from the cycle of birth and death. The eras in which the Buddhas' teachings lasted so long are rare. According to the Commentaries, the teaching of Gotama Buddha will last for only five thousand years before its disappearance from the world. It is now 2,567 years (in 2023) since the Buddha's parinibbāna. Already the number of people in the world who respect and accept the true teaching of the Buddha has dwindled. The disappearance of this sāsana in another 2,500 years is already approaching.

*Q:033 - Gotama Buddha was born 2,647 years ago (in 2023). Before that, for many millions of years, did anybody have a chance to listen to the true teaching of the Buddha, to know it and to practise it?*

- Gotama Buddha was born 2,647 years ago (in 2023). Before that, for many millions of years, nobody had a chance to listen to the true teaching of the Buddha, to know it and to practise it. People of those former times were generally lacking in wholesome kamma (meritorious deeds) and very few of them attained fortunate, noble and happy existences after death.

## **Listening to and Practising the Dhamma**

*Q:034 - How long did he teach the Dhamma in that region?*

- With the appearance of the Buddha, the true Dhamma was taught. After listening to his teaching, many people practised charity (*dāna*) and morality (*sīla*), and so prospered and were reborn in the celestial realms. Millions also became Arahants and attained nibbāna. Most of those people would have

been from Nepal and India, because Prince Siddhattha was born in Nepal, and practised the Dhamma and attained Enlightenment in India. He taught the Dhamma in that region for forty-five years and the people there usually practised it, so they prospered and attained nibbāna, gaining release from all suffering.

### **The Dhamma should also be practised now.**

*Q:035 - What are those true teachings of the Buddha?*

- Today, those who can listen to the true teaching of the Buddha should consider themselves very fortunate, so they should religiously follow and practise the Dhamma. The people now living in Nepal and India, where the true teaching originated, should be especially devoted to practising it.
- *“Sabbā pāpassa ākaraṇaṃ, kusalassa upasampadā,*
- *sacitta pariyodāpanaṃ, etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.”*
- “Abstain from all unwholesome deeds, cultivate wholesome deeds and purify your mind. This is the teaching of all the Buddhas.”

*Q:036 - Three bodily unwholesome deeds should always be avoided, what are they?*

- Bodily misdeeds means killing or harming living beings, unlawfully taking the property of others, and sexual misconduct. These three unwholesome deeds should always be avoided.

*Q:037 - What four kinds of speech are unwholesome and should always be avoided?*

- Verbal misdeeds means telling lies that harm others, creating discord by tale-bearing, using harsh or abusive language, and speaking untruths as if they were true (this concerns teaching false doctrines). These four kinds of speech are unwholesome and should always be avoided.

*Q:038 - What is a wrong livelihood, which should always be avoided?*

- Acting or speaking to gain the property of others unlawfully is a wrong livelihood, which should always be avoided.

*Q:039 - Does careful observance of the five precepts amount to obeying the Buddha’s advice to abstain from all evil deeds and to live a good life?*

- Careful observance of the five precepts amounts to obeying the Buddha’s advice to abstain from all evil deeds and to live a good life.

Q:040 - *What are Wholesome Deeds (Kusala Kamma)?*

- Briefly, wholesome deeds consist of charity, morality and mental development through concentration and insight. Of these, charity or almsgiving is appreciated by almost every Buddhist.

Q:041 - *Who can earn the praise of others and enjoy freedom from blame.?*

- Those who practice charity as much as they can, earn the praise of others and enjoy freedom from blame. The recipients of their charity come to respect and like them, and therefore help them whenever they can. They will be reborn in fortunate and noble existences, and will prosper in all manner of ways.

Q:042 - *What does Morality mean?*

- Morality means observing the rules of moral conduct such as the five or eight precepts together with taking refuge in the three gems of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. Buddhists express their faith in and reliance on the three refuges and undertake to observe the precepts. Thus, they are protected from future rebirths in the lower worlds such as in hell, as animals, as hungry ghosts or as demons (*asūra*). Instead they are reborn in the fortunate human and celestial realms where they can continue to prosper.

Q:043 - *How many kinds of Mental Development are there?*

- Mental Development is of two kinds: tranquillity meditation (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*). There is also a third kind, which is known as 'Ariya Magga Bhāvanā' (mind training leading to the supramundane path). Tranquillity meditation includes ten kinds of concentration devices (*kaṣiṇa*), ten kinds of impurity (*asubha*), ten kinds of recollection (*anussati*) and ten others, making a total of forty. Among these types of meditation, *Buddhānussati* means contemplation and veneration of the Buddha's virtues such as the virtue of Arahant (worthiness of reverence by human beings, devas and Brahmās).

Q:044 - *How should these meditations be practised?*

- By contemplating that the Buddha was endowed with the loftiest virtues of morality, concentration and wisdom, revering him will bring rebirth in fortunate and noble existences hereafter. Another of the Buddha's virtues, *Sammāsambuddho*, is his unaided realisation of the Four Noble Truths. This virtue also entitles the Buddha to special veneration. Because of his omniscience and compassion in teaching what he knew to all beings to

liberate them from suffering, he was also endowed with the virtue of *Buddho*. This virtue should also be contemplated. *Buddhānussati* may also be practised by reflecting on his other virtues. Every time Buddhists respect and venerate the Buddha, they are practising *Buddhānussati*.

- The Buddha's teachings are the fruit of his own practice and experience, which he faithfully transmitted to his disciples. If the Dhamma is religiously and rightly practised it can lead to extraordinary insights. Every time one reflects on the special virtues of the Buddha's teaching and puts one's trust in it, one is cultivating *kusala kamma* in the form of *Dhammānussati*.
- Respectfully contemplating the good and noble virtues well-practised by the disciples of the Buddha amounts to cultivating *Saṅghānussati*.

Q:045 - What is Cultivation of Loving-Kindness?

- Just as one wants to be free from suffering and to dwell at ease, all others wish for the same. Practising *mettā* means to cultivate the sincere desire for the happiness of others, whether particular individuals or all living beings without discrimination.
- By practising *Mettā Bhāvanā*, *Buddhānussati* and so forth as much as one can, one will be following the Buddha's advice to cultivate wholesome deeds (*kusalassa upasampadā*).

Q:046 - What is The Wholesome Deed of Insight?

- This means to accumulate merit by meditating constantly on the impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self nature of the mental and physical phenomena within oneself and in others. This kind of meditation is following the Buddha's own practice, which was directed towards realisation of the true nature of the aggregates of attachment (*upādānakkhandhā*). When this merit matures, it leads to attainment of the noble path and nibbāna.
- After the realisation of the four stages of the noble path, the Buddha urged his disciples to cultivate the four fruitions. How the mind is purified after the arising of the four *phala cittas* will be explained in another talk.

## Practising Insight Meditation

Q:047 - What is Vipassanā the practice?

- Vipassanā is the practice of observing the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena so that we may know them as they really are. Every time that we see, hear, smell, taste, touch or know, these phenomena are constantly appearing and disappearing. It is important that we observe them and be aware of them constantly.

- However, at first it will not be possible to notice everything. We should, therefore, begin by noticing what we can. Every time we breathe, the abdomen rises and falls. This is the manifestation of the air element called *vāyodhātu*.

*Q:048 - Should we begin by observing this process?*

- We should begin by observing this process. Let us do this for three minutes, after sitting in a suitable position for meditation.
- As there is no need to look around, the eyes should be closed. Focus your mind on the abdomen. When the abdomen rises, note 'rising.' When it falls, note 'falling.' It is not necessary to say 'rising' and 'falling' verbally, just make a mental note while observing the process with awareness.
- If the mind wanders elsewhere, notice the wandering of the mind. Then return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

*Q:049 - If bodily fatigue or discomfort intervenes, how many times should you note?*

- If bodily fatigue or discomfort intervenes, note it two or three times, then return to noting the rising and falling movements.

*Q:050 - If a sound is heard, how many times should you note?*

- If a sound is heard, note it two or three times, then return to the rising and falling. Continue to note in this way for just three minutes.

*Q:051 - In three minutes are there less than a hundred and fifty such moments?*

- Within a minute there are about fifty or sixty moments of noting, so in three minutes there are no less than a hundred and fifty such moments. All of these acts of noting are cultivation of *vipassanā kusala* in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. When our concentration deepens as we go on noting in this way, we will come to know mind and matter as distinct phenomena, and the causal relationship between them. We will realise that they arise and pass away constantly, which is their characteristic of impermanence. In the process we will develop progressive stages of insight, eventually realising *nibbana* with the knowledge of the path and its fruition. May you therefore practise this *vipassanā* meditation with as much vigour as you can and quickly attain *nibbāna*.

## Mindfulness – The Only Way

Q:052 - How many kinds of benefits of mindfulness can you get?

- The Buddha taught us in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta:

*“Ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave maggo, sattānaṃ visuddhiyā, sokaparidevānaṃ samatikkamāya, dukkhadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamāya, ñāyassa adhigamāya, nibbānassa sacchikiriyaṃ, yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā.”*

“This is the only way, monks, leading to the purification of beings, to the transcendence of grief and lamentation, to the cessation of pain and sorrow, to the attainment of the right method, and to the realisation of nibbāna; namely, the four foundations of mindfulness.”

Q:053 - Why do living beings do such evil things as killing, causing injury, stealing, robbery, and lying?

- Because they have defilements (*kilesa*) like greed and hatred, living beings do such evil things as killing, causing injury, stealing, robbery, and lying. As a result of these evils they suffer in the four lower worlds (*apāya*). Even if, as a result of some good deed, they are born in the human realm, they suffer such miseries as early death, illness and poverty. These defilements cause them to be reborn repeatedly and thus to undergo suffering like old age, disease and death. If one wishes to be free from this suffering, one must strive to purify oneself of these defilements.

Q:054 - What is only one way to remove these defilements?

- There is only one way to remove these defilements — the way of mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna), by which one contemplates what is going on in one’s own mind and body. If one wishes to get rid of the defilements like greed and hatred, one has to follow this only way of Satipaṭṭhāna. “*Ekāyana*” means “The Only Way” — there is no other way, no alternative. If you walk straight on along the only road, you will not go astray, as there is no junction, you are sure to reach your destination. Similarly, since Satipaṭṭhāna is the only way, if you continue training yourself in mindfulness, you will ultimately attain Arahantship, the noble state of complete purity from all defilements. That is why the Buddha taught us to follow this way of mindfulness.

Q:055 - *How can they eradicate all suffering, In this case, what are examples?*

- Only by training themselves in this *Satipaṭṭhāna* method can they eradicate all suffering. During the Buddha's time there was a young woman called Patācārā, who lost her husband, her two sons, her parents and her brother — all those near and dear to her. She was so overwhelmed with grief that she was driven to madness. One day she came to the Blessed One, heard the Dhamma, took up *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation and dispelled all her grief and lamentation, gaining peace of mind forever.
- Today too, many people have lost sons, daughters, husbands, wives and parents. They were so stricken with grief that they could not eat or sleep. They came to me, and after taking up *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation under my guidance, were relieved of their sorrows in a manner of four, five or ten days. The number of such people is now more than a thousand.
- The practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* will lead one to the cessation of grief and lamentation, not only in this existence, but in all existences to come as well.

Q:056 - *If you want to eradicate suffering, what should you do?*

- The practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* will lead one to the cessation of grief and lamentation, not only in this existence, but in all existences to come as well. So If you want to eradicate suffering, you must take up the practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation.

Q:057 - *What is the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna?*

- The practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* has four aspects:
  1. Mindfulness of the body (*kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).
  2. Mindfulness of feelings (*vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).
  3. Mindfulness of thoughts (*cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).
  4. Mindfulness of mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

## **Mindfulness of the Body**

Q:058 - *How many ways of contemplating the body are there?*

- There are fourteen ways of contemplating the body.

Q:059 - *What is the first way?*

- *Ānāpāna'* means the inhaled and exhaled breath. Every time air is breathed in and out through the nostrils, one makes a note of the in-breathing and out-breathing. By so doing, jhānic concentration can be developed, and from this jhana one can develop insight into the impermanent nature of mental and physical phenomena. This is how it is explained in the commentaries.



Q:060 - *What is the second way?*

- The second way is contemplation of the four postures: standing, sitting, walking and lying down.

Q:061 - *What is the third way?*

- The third way is the four modes of clear comprehension (*sampajañña*).

Q:062 - *What is the fourth way?*

- The fourth way is to contemplate the thirty-two parts of the body: hairs of the head, hairs of the body, nails, teeth, skin, and so on. When jhānic concentration is developed, it can be used to cultivate insight.

Q:063 - *What is the fifth way?*

- The fifth way is developing insight by contemplating the four elements.

Q:064 - *What are the nine remaining contemplations?*

- The nine remaining contemplations are comparing one's own body with a dead body to arouse loathsomeness.

Q:065 - *Where must you concentrate on when you walk?*

- When you walk, you must concentrate on the bodily movements involved in walking and note 'walking, walking.' You must note every part of the step from lifting the foot to pulling it down. When walking fast you must note 'right step,' 'left step.' When walking slowly you must note 'lifting,' 'pushing forward,' 'dropping.'

Q:066 - *Where must you concentrate on when you stop walking and stand still?*

- when you When you stop walking and stand still, you concentrate on the erect body and note as 'standing, standing.'

Q:067 - *Where must you concentrate on when you sit down?*

- When you sit down, you concentrate on the manner of sitting down and note 'sitting down.' When you have sat down, you arrange the positions of your limbs. Note every movement.

Q:068 - *If there is no movement and you are just sitting still, where must you concentrate on?*

- If there is no movement and you are just sitting still, concentrate on the erect position of the body and note as 'sitting, sitting.'

Q:069 - *Our effort may soon slacken if you note only one object like 'sitting.' In that case what should you do?*

- Your effort may soon slacken if you note only one object like 'sitting.' In that case you can combine it with some other object such as touching and note as 'sitting, touching.'

Q:070 - *Where must you concentrate on when you note as 'rising,' 'falling'?*

- You must concentrate on this movement and note as 'rising,' 'falling.'

Q:071 - *Why is it important to note whatever bodily movement there is?*

- Enlightenment can be very quick indeed! So it is important to note whatever bodily movement there is.

Q:072 - *How do you distinguish between mind and matter, when you note 'walking,' 'rising'?*

- When you note 'walking,' the walking is matter, a non-sentient thing. The noting is mind, which is sentient. So you distinguish between mind and matter. When you note the abdomen as 'rising' the rising is matter, and the noting is mind. So you distinguish between mind and matter.

Q:073 - *When will you realise nibbāna and attain the noble path and fruition?*

- Once your knowledge of these three characteristics is perfected, you will realise nibbāna and attain the noble path and fruition, you will become an Arahant. Then you will be free from all suffering after your final passing away (*parinibbāna*). At least you will attain the path and fruition of a Stream-winner. Then you will never be reborn in the lower realms of existence again. So we must strive until we attain at least the stage of a Stream-winner.

Q:074 - *What are The Four Modes of Clear Comprehension?*

- Now we come to cultivating the four modes of clear comprehension:

1. *Satthaka sampajañña.*

2. *Sappāya sampajañña.*
3. *Gocara sampajañña.*
4. *Asammoha sampajañña.*

Q:075 - *What kind of consideration is called 'satthaka sampajañña'?*

- When you are about to do or say something, you should consider whether it will be useful or not, and then you should do or say only what is useful. This kind of consideration is called '*satthaka sampajañña.*'

Q:076 - *What kind of consideration is called 'sappāya sampajañña'?*

- Even if it is useful, you should also consider whether it is suitable or not, and then you should do or say only what is suitable. This is called '*sappāya sampajañña.*' These two modes of clear comprehension are beneficial in worldly matters as well. When meditating, you may consider whether you should do walking or sitting, then do whichever is more suitable. However, when you are contemplating in earnest, you do not need to make these considerations, but just go on with your noting.

Q:077 - *What is the third comprehension, gocara sampajañña, for the meditator?*

- The third comprehension, *gocara sampajañña*, for the meditator, is just noting the physical and mental phenomena without any let-up.

Q:078 - *What is is asammoha sampajañña?*

- As you go on meditating with *gocara sampajañña*, your concentration becomes strong and see for yourself the incessant arising and passing away of things. You very clearly understand how these phenomena are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self. This understanding is *asammoha sampajañña*, which means comprehension without delusion.

Q:079 - *What is gocara sampajañña in going or coming?*

- This practice of clear comprehension is explained in the text as, "*Abhikkante paṭikkante sampajānakāri hoti,*" which means, "Both in advancing and returning he practises clear comprehension." This reminds us to note and know every step taken in going or coming, Thus noting the meditation objects relentlessly is *gocara sampajañña*.

Q:080 - What is *asammoha sampajañña* in walking?

- As you go on noting, your concentration becomes very strong and you come to distinguish between mind and matter. You know the walking as matter and the noting of it as mind. You may not know the Pāli words 'nāma' and 'rūpa,' but if you know the difference between what is cognised and what cognises, then that is enough. Again, you understand that the intention to walk gives rise to walking, and that walking gives rise to the noting of the walking. So you distinguish between cause and effect. The intention to walk, the walking and the noting of it all pass away immediately, so you understand very clearly that they are all impermanent. This is comprehension of things as they really are, or *asammoha sampajañña*.

Q:081 - What is *gocara sampajañña* and *asammoha sampajañña* in looking, 'seeing'?

- Then it says in the text, "*Alokite vilokite sampajānakāri hoti.*" This means, "In looking forward or looking aside, he practises clear comprehension." Whenever you look and see you must note, 'looking,' 'seeing,' which is *gocara sampajañña*.
- This understanding of their true characteristics is *asammoha sampajañña*.
- As you continue to note, you realise how all the phenomena of looking, seeing and noting pass away instantly. These acts of noting clearly are *gocara sampajañña* and understanding impermanence and so forth is *asammoha sampajañña*.

Q:082 - What is Mindfulness of The Four Elements?

- As you go on meditating in the way we have explained, you may come across what feels hard and rigid. Then you know the earth element (*paṭhavīdhātu*). When heat, warmth or cold is manifest, you know the fire element (*tejodhātu*). When tension, stiffness, pushing or motion is manifest, you know the air element (*vāodhātu*). When liquidity, fluidity or wetness is manifest, you know the water element (*āpodhātu*). You clearly perceive that there are only these four elements in this physical body and that there is no self or soul. Again, since these four elements arise and pass away very rapidly you understand how they are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self. When you know these things as they really are, and when your knowledge has matured, you can realise nibbāna by the noble path. You can then become a Stream-winner and so on.

Q:083 - What is Mindfulness of Feelings?

- Regarding the contemplation of feelings, the Buddha said, "*Sukhaṃ vā vedanaṃ vedayamāno, 'Sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vedayāmi'ti pajānāti, dukkhaṃ vā*

*vedanaṃ vedayamāno, 'Dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ vedayāmi' ti pajānāti, adukkhamasukhaṃ vā vedanaṃ vedayamāno 'Adukkhamasukhaṃ vedanaṃ vedayāmi' ti pajānāti."*

- This means, "When feeling a pleasant feeling one knows, 'I feel a pleasant feeling,' when feeling a painful feeling one knows, 'I feel a painful feeling,' when feeling a neutral feeling one knows, 'I feel a neutral feeling.'"
- If sensations of tiredness or pain occur in the body while noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, you should concentrate on them and note as 'tired' or 'painful.' If the feelings disappear as you note, you can return to noting the rising and falling.

*Q:084 - If the unpleasant sensations increase, what should you try?*

- If the unpleasant sensations increase, you should try to bear them as much as you can. When you have to note sharp pains, it is good to remember the Burmese saying, "Patience leads to nibbāna." If you can bear the pain and go on noting it, the pain often disappears. If so, go on noting the rising and falling, and your insight will make great progress.

*Q:085 - If, however, the pain persists and proves almost unbearable, what should you do?*

- If, however, the pain persists and proves almost unbearable, you may change your posture. However, when you change, you must do so slowly and note every movement very carefully. This is how one should meditate on feelings in the body.
- As you are noting, unpleasant thoughts too may arise. You may feel miserable or disheartened. Then you should note as 'miserable' or 'disheartened.' They will very soon pass away as you note on. Then return to noting the rising and falling again. If a pleasant feeling arises in the body, note it as 'pleasant, pleasant.' If happiness or joy arises in the mind, just note 'happy' or 'joyful.' Such happy moods will come to you in torrents when you gain the knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*). You will also experience great joy or rapture (*pīti*). This too, you must note as 'rapture, rapture.'

*Q:086 - When will this neutral feeling become prominent?*

- The neutral feeling, which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, very often occurs in both the mind and the body, but it is hard to discern. Only when concentration is especially strong, will this neutral feeling become prominent after the disappearance of pain and before the appearance of pleasure, or after the disappearance of pleasure and before the appearance of pain.

- These sensations break into small pieces. You should note this neutral feeling too. When the knowledge of arising and passing away is well developed and the knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*) is gained, this neutral feeling will become apparent. At the stage of knowledge of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārupekkha-ñāṇa*) it will be even more prominent. Then you must note this neutral feeling.

Q:087 - *When will you find that these sensations break into small pieces?*

- When your concentration is very strong, while you note 'tired,' 'hot' or 'painful' you will find that these sensations break into small pieces. To the untrained mind, tiredness, heat and pain seem to last very long, but to the mindful meditator they are just small pieces and do not cause much discomfort, so he or she feels unperturbed. If one goes on meditating, even severe pains can be overcome. So it is said, "*Samudaya-dhammānupassī vā ... vāya-dhammānupassī vā ... samudaya-vāya-dhammānupassī vā vedanāsu viharati.*" — "He abides contemplating the arising of things in feelings, or he abides contemplating the passing away of things in feelings, or he abides contemplating both the arising and passing away of things in feelings."
- While thus contemplating the arising and passing away of feelings, one can reach the noble path and become a Stream-winner. This is the contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*).

Q:088 - *What is Mindfulness of Thoughts?*

- (Regarding contemplation of mind (*cittānupassanā*) it is said, "*Sarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ 'Sarāgaṃ cittaṃ' ti pajānāti, vitarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ 'Vitarāgaṃ cittaṃ' ti pajānāti*" — "(A monk) is aware of a passionate mind as 'passionate mind'; of a dispassionate mind as 'dispassionate mind.'" There are sixteen kinds of mind to contemplate. So, while contemplating the rising and falling, if a passionate mind arises, you must note 'passionate mind.' As you note thus, the passionate mind will disappear. Then a dispassionate mind appears. Note it as 'dispassionate mind.' Likewise, if an angry mind arises, note as 'angry mind.' If a deluded thought occurs such as "I am permanent", "I am happy" or "I am", note it as 'delusion.' Similarly, if a wandering mind appears, note it as 'wandering.' If a lazy mind appears, note it as 'lazy.' You must note whatever mind appears and be aware of it as it is. When concentration is strong, whenever you note, you will find such minds arising and passing away, never remaining for a moment. So it is said, "*Samudaya-dhammānupassī vā ... vāya-dhammānupassī vā ... samudaya-vāya-dhammānupassī vā cittasmiṃ viharati*" — "He abides contemplating the arising of things in the mind, or he abides contemplating the passing away of things in the mind, or he abides contemplating both the arising and passing away of things in the mind."

Q:089 - *What is Mindfulness of Mind Objects?*

- Now we will deal briefly with contemplation of mind-objects or mental phenomena (*dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*). The Buddha taught the contemplation of mental-objects in five sections.

Q:090 - *What is Mindfulness of the Hindrances?*

- The first section is the contemplation of the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). There are five of them:
  1. Sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*).
  2. Anger or ill-will (*vyāpāda*).
  3. Sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*).
  4. Restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca-kukkucca*).
  5. Sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).
- This is the classification according to the Pāli text, but if one separates *thīna* and *middha*, and *uddhacca* and *kukkucca*, there will seven in all.
- If, while you are noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, sensual desire arises, you should note as 'pleasure,' 'desire' and so forth. This is explained in the text of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as, "*Santaṃvā ajjhajjaṃ kāmacchandam 'Atthi me ajjhattam kāmacchando'ti pajānāti.*" — "(A monk) who has sensual desire in him is aware, 'There is sensual desire in me.'" As one notes thus, the sensual desire disappears. This disappearance of desire, too, should be noted. Sensual desire arises because of ignorance, because one has failed to note the first thought. One must understand that this ignorance of the real nature of things gives rise to desire. As one meditates and understands the truth, sensual desire ceases to arise. This fact, too, should be understood. When one reaches the path of Arahantship, one has completely eradicated such desires. You must understand that an Arahant is free from such desires. Thus, one should know about sensual desire.
- In the same way, when anger arises one notes and is aware 'I am angry.' When one feels dull and lazy, note as 'I feel dull' or 'I feel lazy.' When one gets restless, note as 'I am getting restless.' When one feels remorse at having done something wrong, one must note as 'I feel remorseful.' If one harbours doubts about the Buddha or the Dhamma, one must note and be aware of these doubts. One often mistakes doubt for ideas. If a meditator keeps on noting whatever arises, the hindrances will be dispelled. They come about because of ignorance. Once one is fully aware of them, they cease to arise. The noble path eradicates them completely. While meditating, one understands the arising and passing away of the particular hindrance one is noting. This understanding will lead one to the noble path and its fruition. One can become a Stream-winner. This, in brief, is contemplation of the hindrances.

Q:091 - What is Contemplation of the Aggregates?

- As you contemplate the body by noting, 'walking,' 'standing,' 'sitting,' 'rising,' or 'falling,' you know for yourself, "This is matter, which is insentient. It arises and passes away thus." When you note 'pain,' 'pleasure,' 'happy' and so on you know, "This is pleasant or unpleasant feeling. It arises and passes away thus." When you note 'perceiving' you know, "This is perception, which perceives sight and so forth. It arises and passes away thus." When you note volitions like 'striving,' 'doing,' 'speaking' and so forth you know, "These are mental formations. They arise and pass away thus." When you note 'thinking' you know, "This is consciousness. It arises and passes away thus." While you meditate on the arising and passing away of matter, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness, you can reach the noble path and its fruition, becoming a Stream-winner. This, in brief is contemplation of the five aggregates.

Q:092 - What is Contemplation of the Six Senses?

- If, while seeing, one notes 'seeing, seeing,' concentration will gradually develop and one comes to know the eye, the visible object and the seeing as distinct phenomena. The eye is called '*cakkhāyatana*' — the eye organ from which arises visual consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*). The visible object is called '*rūpāyatana*,' the sight from which arises visual consciousness. The seeing is called *manāyatana*, mind organ, from which arises the act of consciousness (that is *phassa*, *vedanā* and so on). Failure to note what you see, or even if you note it, failing to understand impermanence and so on, gives rise to fetters such as taking pleasure in the visible object. You must also know the arising of the fetters. If the fetter passes away because of noting it, you must know this too. Once you reach the noble path, these fetters cease to arise and this must also be known. This is how you should meditate and understand with regard to seeing.
- In the same way, if one notes 'hearing, hearing' one understands the physical phenomena of the ear and the sound. If one notes 'smelling, smelling' one understands the physical phenomena of the nose and the odour. If one notes 'tasting, tasting' one understands the physical phenomena of the tongue and the taste. If one notes 'touching, touching' one understands the physical phenomena of the body and tangible objects. (Contemplation of walking, standing, sitting, rising and so on belong to this contemplation of touch. That is why we say 'touching' and so on). One who notes 'thinking, thinking' while thinking understands the physical phenomenon of the base of consciousness and the mental phenomenon of ideas or mind-consciousness. If you do not know them as they really are, because you have failed to note them properly, fetters like sensual desire arise from the six senses. This arising of fetters must



also be noted. If, on being promptly noted, they pass away, note this too. When, on reaching the noble path, these fetters cease to arise altogether, you must know this too.

- By noting 'seeing,' 'hearing,' and so on, and by understanding the real nature of the eye, visible objects, seeing and so on, you can gain the noble path and become a Stream-winner. This, in brief, is the contemplation of the six senses.
- The fetters (*saṃyojana*) referred to here are defilements or base instincts, which, like the ropes that restrain oxen, bind us firmly to the round of rebirth (*saṃsāra*). They are:
  1. Sensual desire (*kāmarāga*).
  2. Anger or aversion (*paṭigha*).
  3. Pride (*māna*).
  4. Wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) that mistake mind and matter as self.
  5. Scepticism or doubt (*vicikicchā*).
  6. Adherence to rites and rituals (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*). This means to believe than any practice other than the Eightfold Noble Path will lead to liberation.
  7. Craving rooted in eternalism (*bhavarāga*). Believing that one will continue to exist after death, one craves for continual pleasure.
  8. Craving rooted in annihilationism (*vibhavarāga*). Believing that one will not exist after death, one craves to enjoy the present life.
  9. Avarice (*macchariyā*).
  10. Ignorance (*avijjā*) or delusion through which one mistakes what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self as permanent, happy and as having a self.

Q:093 - What are eradicated by the path of a Stream-winner (*sotāpattmagga*) and by the path of a Non-returner (*anāgāmi-magga*)?

- Of the above ten fetters, wrong view, doubt and adherence to rites and rituals are eradicated by the path of a Stream-winner (*sotāpatti-magga*); sensual desire and anger are eradicated by the path of a Non-returner (*anāgāmi-magga*) and the remaining fetters are eradicated by Arahantship.

Q:094 - What is Contemplation of the Factors of Enlightenment?

- The factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) are the means by which one realises nibbāna. There are seven of them:
  1. Mindfulness (*sati*).
  2. Investigation of phenomena (*dhammavicaya*).
  3. Energy (*virīya*).
  4. Joy or rapture (*pīti*).

5. Tranquility (*passaddhi*).
  6. Concentration (*samādhi*).
  7. Equanimity (*upekkhā*).
- It is said in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta that if any of these arise, one should be aware of it. If any are absent, one should be aware of this too. The factors of enlightenment do not arise in the beginner. They occur only when one has attained the knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*) or higher stages. If you persistently contemplate all phenomena, as explained in the section on mindfulness of the body, by noting 'walking,' 'standing,' 'sitting,' 'bending,' 'stretching,' 'rising,' 'falling,' 'tired,' 'hot,' etc., you will soon attain the knowledge of arising and passing away. Then you will clearly understand the impermanence of things. Every time you note the arising and passing away of things, you have the enlightenment factor 'mindfulness.' When your concentration slackens and you are not so mindful, you are aware that the factor of mindfulness is absent. Similarly, when the factor arises that investigates mind and matter, you are aware that it is present, and when it is absent you are aware that it is absent. Through this awareness your concentration will become very strong. As you develop your awareness of the arising and passing away of these factors, you will in due course attain the noble path and its fruition, and become a Stream-winner. This, in brief, is the contemplation of the factors of enlightenment.

Q:095 - *What is Contemplation of the Four Noble Truths?*

- Regarding the contemplation of the Four Noble Truths the Buddha taught, "*Idaṃ dukkhaṃ ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'Ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo' ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'Ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho' ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, 'Ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha gāmini paṭipadā' ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti.*" — "He comprehends as it really is, 'This is suffering.' He comprehends as it really is, 'This is the cessation of suffering.' He comprehends as it really is, 'This is the Path leading to the cessation of suffering.'"

Q:096 - *The mental and physical phenomena occurring in the body are really just suffering. Why?*

- Because they are the basis of suffering like physical pain, mental pain, old age, death and so on. Since they are impermanent, death can come at any moment. Physical suffering like aches and pains occur because there is a physical body and consciousness. Without a physical body, physical pain is quite impossible.

Q:097 - *Though there is a body, if there is no consciousness, pain or suffering is also impossible. Why?*

- If a log or a stone or a lump of clay is beaten with a stick, struck with a knife, or put into a fire, it will suffer no pain because it lacks consciousness. So the physical body without consciousness is no cause for physical pain. However, sentient beings have got both a physical body and consciousness, so they have to endure all kinds of physical and mental suffering. Therefore, mind and manner are really nothing but suffering.
- Moreover, every time we are reborn, we must undergo the suffering of old age, death and so on, because we have these mental and physical phenomena, which are subject to decay and dissolution. So they are really suffering. They do not last for a second — not even a millisecond. They pass away very rapidly. If no more mental and physical phenomena arise when they pass away, that is the moment to die. How terrible it is to depend for one's support on these unreliable phenomena, which can bring death so suddenly. That is why they are nothing but suffering.
- However, those who do not meditate on the arising and passing away of phenomena do not understand how unstable they are, and so are not alarmed. Even those who meditate, if they haven't yet realised the fleeting nature of things, will not be afraid.

Q:098 - *When will one gain the deep kind of concentration that can perceive the fleeting nature of things?*

- Only then will one understand that death can come at any moment, and one will be alarmed. One will realise that what is the basis of pain, misery, old age and death is indeed suffering. One knows this for oneself, which is what the Buddha meant by the words, "*Idaṃ dukkhaṇ'ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti.*" — "He comprehends as it really is, 'This is suffering.'"
- Once you understand suffering as it really is, your attachment to these mental and physical phenomena is eliminated. This is comprehending by eliminating craving, which is the true cause of suffering. Every time you eliminate craving, you achieve the momentary cessation of suffering. By developing the path of insight you achieve the knowledge of the truth of the path. This is how you understand the Four Noble Truths every time you meditate on suffering. As you continue to meditate and your insight is perfected, you will realise nibbāna. This is knowing the truth of the cessation of suffering by the knowledge of the right path. By such knowledge the realisation of the truth of suffering is accomplished. The realisation of the truth of the cause of suffering is accomplished by eliminating it, and the truth of the path is accomplished by developing it. When you realise the Four Noble Truths by such meditation, you become at least a Stream-winner and

are saved from the lower realms (*apāya*) for ever. This, in brief, is contemplation of the Four Noble Truths.

Q:099 - *What are The Fruits of Mindfulness?*

- *Regarding the benefits that one will enjoy from the development of this mindfulness the Buddha said, “Yo hi koci bhikkhave ime cattāro satipaṭṭhāne evaṃ bhāveyya, sattā vassāni ... sattā māsāni ... sattāhaṃ, tassa dvinnaṃ phalānaṃ aññātaraṃ phalaṃ paṭikaṅkhaṃ, diṭṭhe va dhamme aññā sati va upādisesa anāgāmitā.” — “Whoever, monks, practises these four foundations of mindfulness for seven years ... even for seven months ... even for seven days will win one of two fruits, in this very life he will win the highest knowledge or, if there is some attachment remaining, he will win the path of a Non-returner.”*
- *If you cannot become a Non-returner as stated above, you can certainly become a Stream-winner.*

Q:100 - *Do people have now realised the path, its fruition and nibbāna after meditating for one or two months on bodily movements, mental states, feelings or the six senses? Are they a few or many?*

- *Many have now realised the path, its fruition and nibbāna after meditating for one or two months on bodily movements, mental states, feelings or the six senses. So by practising this Satipaṭṭhāna method to the best of your ability, may you be able to attain the path and its fruition, and may you realise nibbāna very soon.*